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END OF THE ROAD, RATCHET!

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THE TRANSFORMERS

INFILTRATION

> THE TRANSFORMERS #2

>INFILTRATION

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>>>>>

INFILTRATION:

Pulled together by a stolen palm computer loaded with secrets, teenage runaway VERITY CARLO, conspiracy theorist HUNTER O'NION and Autobot medic RATCHET have taken refuge in the Riverside, CA garage of JIMMY PINK. But the activation of the computer has drawn the hunters—Decepticons RUNABOUT and RUNAMUCK...

PHASE ONE CONTINUES...

>>>>>

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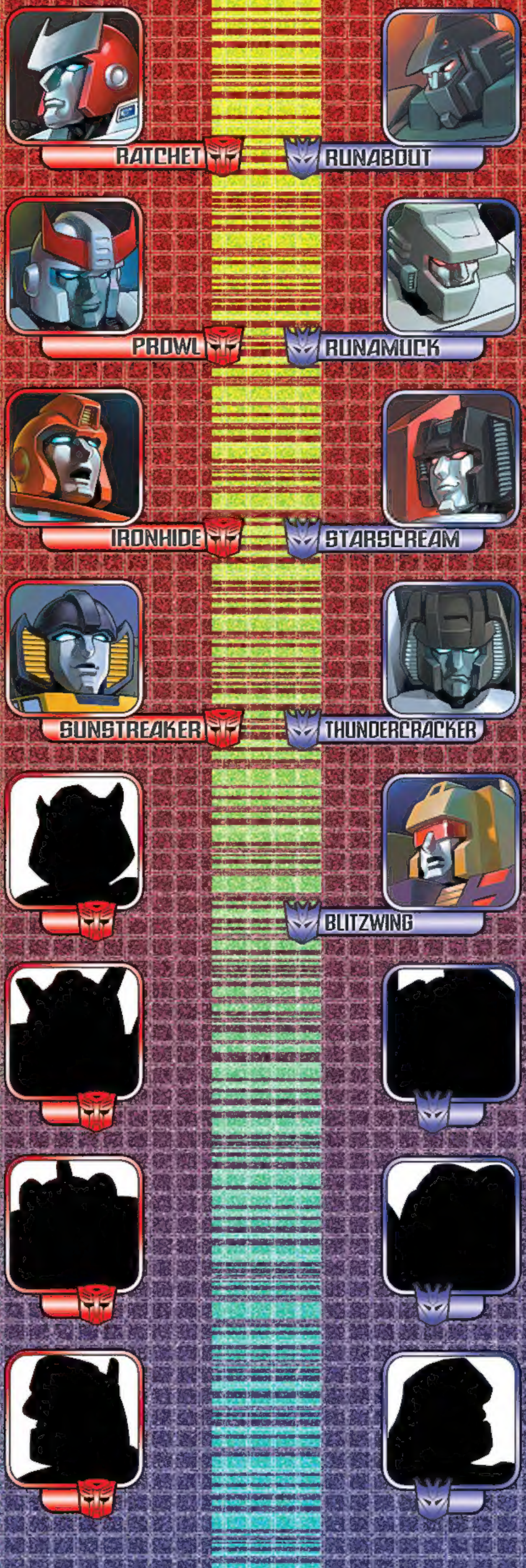


RIVERSIDE, CA:

I WON'T ASK AGAIN...

GIVE IT TO ME!

AROUND ME, *TRIPHAMMER* HEARTS WORK OVERTIME AS BLOOD DRAINS FROM SURFACE CAPILLARIES. THROATS PARCH, MUSCLES *SPASM* AND *LOCK*.

EXPOSED TO THE HARSH *REALITY* THAT SHAPES AND DEFINES MY LIFE, EVEN THE MOST *OPEN* HUMAN MIND TAKES SHOCKED, STUTTERING REFUGE.

HERE...

I DO SOMETHING I SHOULD HAVE DONE SEVERAL CHRONOTICKS AGO.

AND THEN...

I LET HIM *HAVE* IT.

KZZZZTISH

THE STUNT BURNS OUT MY *HOLO-MATTER* GENERATORS. BUT THEN I GET THE DISTINCT FEELING...

...THE TIME FOR SUBTERFUGE IS *LONG* PAST!

RUNABOUT?

SKRUNCH

YOU...

...PIECE OF AUTOBOT-

UH-UH...

GHAK!

...NOT IN FRONT OF THE HUMANS!

HUNTER, VERITY, JIMMY-

IN. NOW!

TWO WHOLE *MEGACYCLES* OF INTRICATE, SUB-RADAR CUT AND THRUST LAID BARE IN A *BRUISING* INSTANT OF RAW, PRIMAL CONFRONTATION.

WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT, I *KNOW.*

YOU—

AND—

WOW.

...FOR US, FOR *THEM*...

SCREEEE

...NOTHING WILL *EVER* BE THE SAME AGAIN.

MY...

...*POOR* GARAGE!

ARIZONA:

HE DEAD?

VERY.

VERY?

I'D NEED TO DO A MORE *THOROUGH* EXAMINATION, OF COURSE...

...BUT THE TRAUMA IS SYSTEMWIDE, AS IF HIS *ENTIRE* BODY WENT INTO SPASM.

LET'S *TURN* HIM...

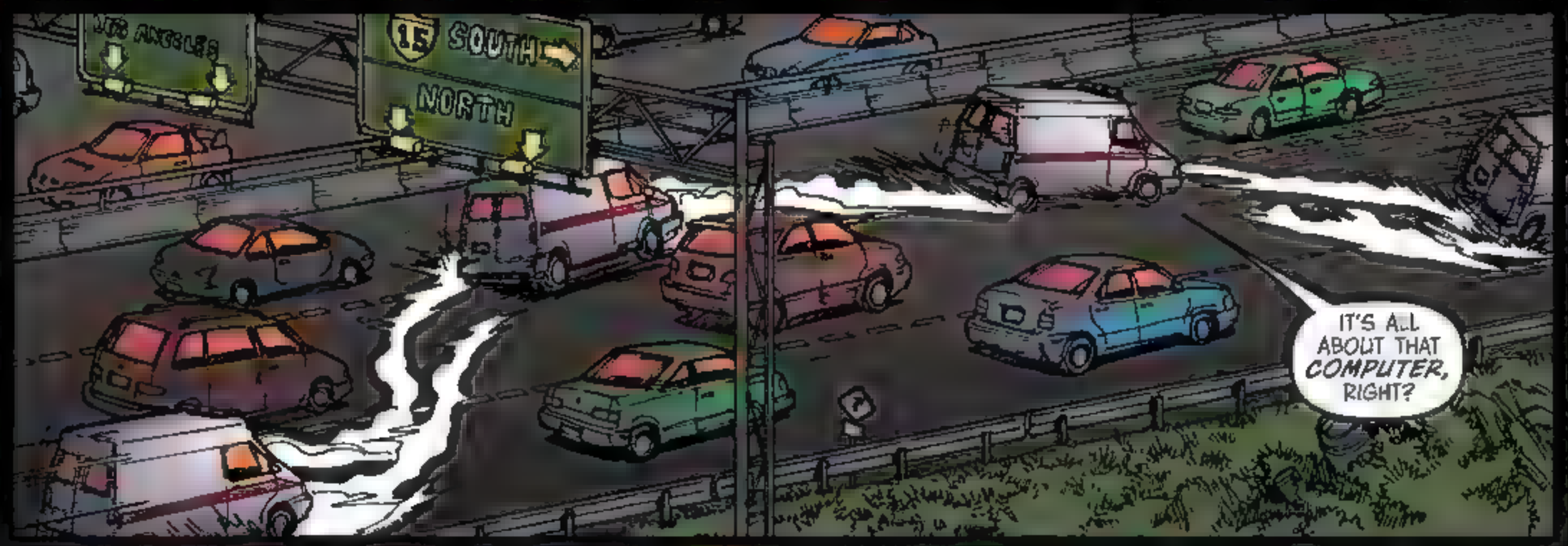
HMM... ANYONE YOU KNOW?

NOPE.

ANNND... NO I.D. TO SPEAK OF, NEITHER.

YEAH, YEAH... GUY YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR IS *RIGHT HERE*, ON THE RESERVATION...

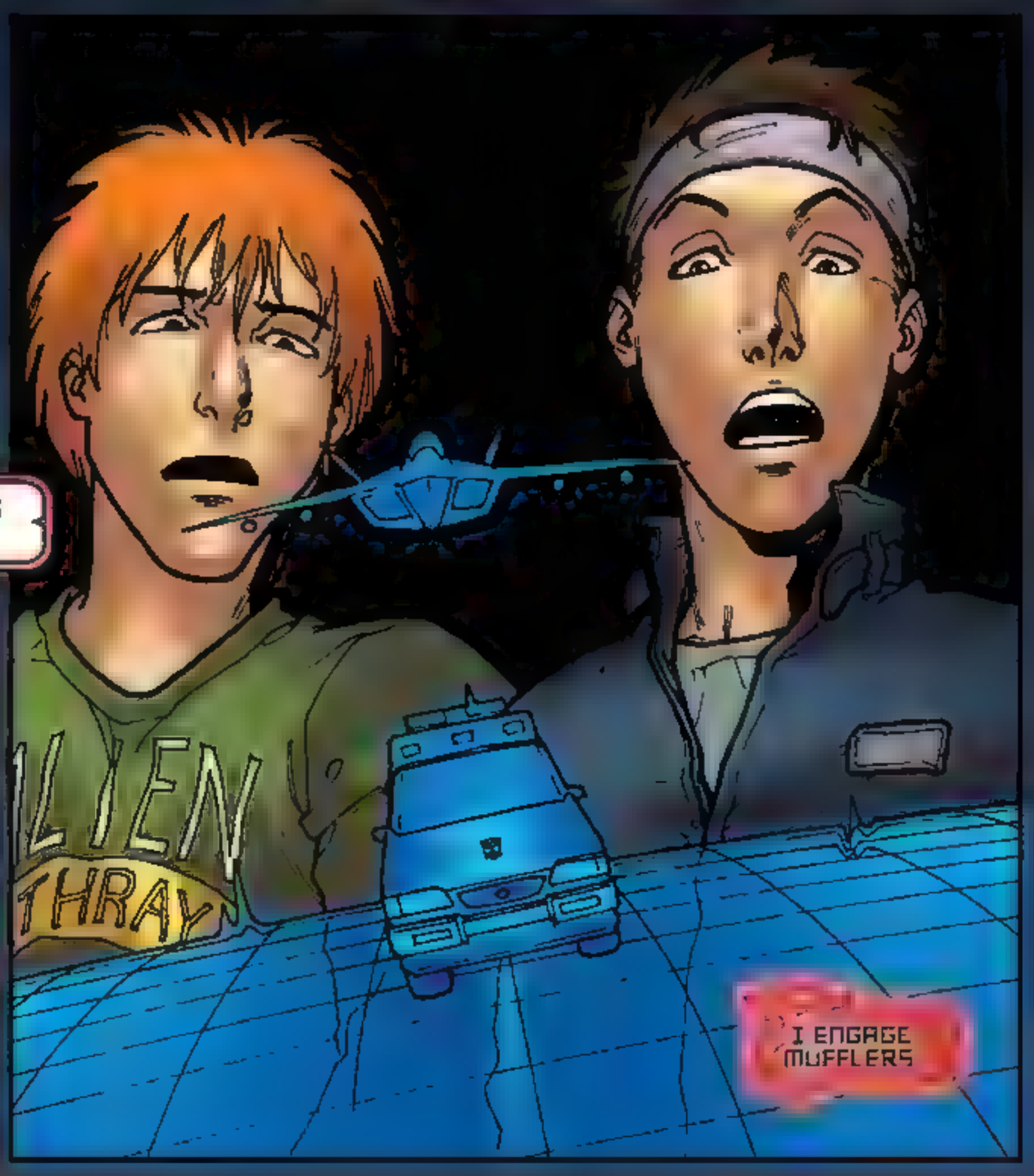
"...DEADER'N GENERAL CUSTER."


LOS ANGELES
15 SOUTH
NORTH
IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT COMPUTER, RIGHT?

THE ONE SHE STOLE!
HEL-LO? R GHT HERE, Y'KNOW!
YES. I WAS ONLY ABLE TO SCAN A FEW IMAGES, BUT WHAT I DID SEE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO GET US KILLED.

WE...THAT IS, MY GROUP INTERCEPTED A CODED DECEPTICON PULSEWAVE.
A HUMAN MALE HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY TARGETED FOR DELETION.

I THINK NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY. WHOEVER HE WAS, HE MANAGED WHAT OUR ENTIRE DETACHMENT COULDN'T AND-
HANG ON...


ALIEN
THRAY
I ENGAGE MUFFLERS

...JUST IN TIME!

KA-BOOM

CRUNCH

A SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION, RUNAMUCK!

MUSIC TO MY AUDIO RECEPTORS, RUNABOUT!

THUMP

KRRONK

THIS IS *VERY* BAD!

NO?! REALLY?

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, JIMMY. THIS IS *NOT* THE WAY IT HAPPENS.

DECEPTICONS OPERATE UNDER A STRICT BLANKET OF STEALTH. FOR THEM TO HAVE BROKEN COVER SO *OVERTLY*, SO *BRAZENLY*, THE DATA ON THAT COMPUTER MUST EITHER BE FAR MORE VALUABLE THAN I REALIZED..

.. OR THEY JUST *DON'T* CARE ANYMORE.

DR-*UFF*-BOTH!

KRA KRAK!!

OREGON:

WELL?

THE ORE IS PURE. NO CONTAMINANTS

WE CAN *BEGIN*...

HMM... ABOUT TIME

HAVING BROKEN PROTOCOL, WE CAN EXPECT A *RESPONSE*. I'D *LIKE* TO BE READY.

DESTINY, BLITZWING, IS WITHIN MY GRASP...

"...AND I'LL LET NOTHING AND NO ONE DENY ME NOW!"

NO DISINTEGRATOR RAY?!

FOOM

WHAT KIND OF ALIENDEATHWARMACHINE *ARE* YOU?

ALIEN? I'M A *MEDIC*. I PREFER ..

OH!

OOOH, GAAAWD!

HONK HONK

HOOOOOOOK

SCREEEEEE

REDEADBOUND

...TO EXPLORE *OTHER* OPTIONS.

A-ALIVE. WE'RE... *ALIVE.*

I NEED A *LAUNDRY*... FAST!

JUST—

JUST—

STOOOOOP!

EEERRRSSH

CAN'T— CAN'T *BREATHE* IN HERE.

LET ME OUT! *LET* ME—

—OUT?

65 MPH

I—I DID A BAD THING, I *KNOW*, BUT...

I CAN'T *DEAL* WITH THIS, OKAY.

VERITY...

I JUST *CAN'T!*

HUNTER...

NO OFFENSE, BUT... *I'LL* TALK TO HER.

RIGHT. YEAH...

ALIEN

DEATH

GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU, CARLO...

...YOU *REALLY* KNOW HOW TO BLOW MY SKIRT UP!

THERE I WAS, ONE DAY OF IDLE MECHANICAL MALFEASANCE BLURRING INTO THE NEXT, AND YOU POP UP WITH A BONA FIDE VEHICLE OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL ORIGIN.

SEE, IT'S NOT STUFF LIKE *THAT* SCARES US, IT'S ORDINARY, EVERYDAY LIFE.

I'VE SPENT THE GREATER PART OF MY EIGHTEEN YEARS ON THIS PLANET FIGHTING THE ENNUI THAT GRIPS NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF THE POPULATION.

YOU AND ME, WE BELONG OUT HERE, ON THE *EDGE*. THERE'S A *WORD* FOR OUR SORT, SOME NEW-AGE, PC BIT OF PSYCHOBABBLE...

HOWK

WHUUH!

OH YEAH, THAT'S IT...

...*FREAK!*

SO, AH...

YOU GOT A NAME?

RATCHET. THANKS FOR ASKING.

FINALLY.

AND THE GUYS CHASING US ARE *DECEPTICONS,* RIGHT? SO...

...WHAT DOES THAT MAKE *YOU?*

NERVOUS

I'VE GIVEN THEM SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, BUT THEY'LL *KEEP* COMING.

RIGHT NOW, WE SHOULD BE PUTTING AS *MUCH* DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM AND US AS POSSIBLE. WE–

HERE... WE CALL THAT *EVASION.* WANT TO TRY AGAIN? THEM DECEPTICON, YOU...

WE–

GOTTA GO!

NOW!

BUT–

NOT YET

GO-GO-GO!

...MARY, FULL OF GRACE...

GO!

NO.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

65 MPH

AH. OKAY. I'LL KEEP.

NOW.

KAKOOM

ALIEN
DEATHRAY

KRIZZK

ZRR

VRRRT

TELL ME THEY'RE FRIENDS OF YOURS...

ZMMMM!!

FROOSH

VIP VIP VIP

KROUMPH

ZZZRRMMM

FROOOM

VIP VIP

KER-POW

GGFFNG!

COMRADES-IN-ARMS.

SUMMONED—ALBEIT RATHER *BELATEDLY*—WHILE WE WERE STILL AT JIMMY'S GARAGE.

HM... THESE, AH, *COMRADES* OF YOURS...

...NOT BIG ON HUGS AND HAPPY RETURNS, I'M GUESSING?

PROWL?

RATCHET.

YOU FACE *SEVEN* COUNTS OF MISCONDUCT, GROSS DERELICTION OF DUTY AND DISOBEYING A DIRECT ORDER FROM A *SENIOR* OFFICER...

...PLUS SUNDRY VIOLATIONS OF SECTIONS SIX, ELEVEN, FIFTEEN, AND TWENTY-TWO OF THE *AUTOBOT* CODE OF INTERPLANETARY CONFLICT.

ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO *SAY?*

TWO WORDS...

...SEIGE MODE.

ON THE HUMAN'S COMPUTER, AN *IMAGE*...

...REDOLENT OF BITTER FAILURE AND NIGHTMARISH CONSEQUENCES, OF BODYCOUNTS AND WORLDS AFLAME.

THINGS... *FALL APART.*

TO BE CONTINUED.